

HAWES & HIGH ABBOTSIDE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of 19th February 2018 Commencing at Gayle Institute at 7.15pm

Present: Cllrs J Blackie (Chairman), A Fawcett, S Hunter, Mrs A Rhodes, A Sunter, I Woolley, Y Waluda

In Attendance: Mrs F Cartwright (Clerk), 31 members of the public

Apologies: Cllrs Mrs S Alderson, Ms A Caygill, B Fawcett

1. The Minutes of the Meeting of 27th November 2017 were accepted as a true record, signed by the Chairman.
 2. Matters arising - no matters arising.
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3. Chairman's Items

The proposal from Royal Mail to close the Hawes Sorting Office and transfer the 2 / 3 full-time postmen based there to the Leyburn Sorting Office

The Chairman advised the meeting that he had invited representatives from both the Post Office and Royal Mail to attend the Parish Council Meeting, and they had declined to attend.

The Chairman explained the background that Royal Mail had proposed the closure of the Hawes Sorting office after 70 years of excellent service. There has been no informal consultation from Royal Mail, just a phone call from Steve Utting (National Mailwork Manager, Post Office Ltd.) on Friday 2nd February and a subsequent letter from the Post Office received on Saturday 3rd February. The Chairman expressed his disappointment that Royal Mail, a private company providing a very visible public service would treat their operational partners in this way.

The Chairman made his position as the Volunteer Sub-Postmaster known. In 2014 the UDCP Ltd took over the running of the Hawes Post Office which included two Outreach Sub Post Offices at Bainbridge Extra Care Housing Complex and Sykes Village Shop/Tea Room, Askrigg. When the Upper Dales Community Partnership (UDCP) Ltd took over the Hawes Post Office, a top-quality unit at the Hawes Business Park was provided for the Sorting Office. The Sorting Office is financed by Royal Mail, now a private company, but operates via the Post Office.

The Hawes Post Office has supported the Sorting Office - even though it runs at a loss covered by the UDCP Ltd - because of its importance to have it based locally to maintain an excellent delivery service and to retain the local employment tied to it.

The Chairman pointed out that Steve Utting has made it clear that the Royal Mail proposal is not a done deal and the Post Office would like to hear what the local community views are. However he also said that if The Post Office refused their request then the Hawes Sorting Office would remain open, paid for by Royal Mail and with the employment tied to Hawes, although Royal Mail could if it demonstrated a saving or operational efficiencies transfer the sorting of mail to another location of its choice. This was a part of the contract between The Post Office and Royal Mail.

The Chairman commented that most people in Hawes and High Abbotside will remember the names of postmen who have been pillars of the local community and who have served the community so well right back to 1945. The two positions at postmen (at times three) have always been based at Hawes Post Office and the positions have been occupied by local people from Hawes. The community wants to retain local services and local year-round steady well-paid employment in the Upper Dales and the proposal threatens both. The proposal would also undoubtedly

Jan Blackie
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lead to a deterioration in customer service. Over fifty businesses working from home from the Hawes area rely on the timely arrival of the post.

The Chairman explained that Royal Mail have claimed that the closure of the Hawes Sorting Office would lead to cost savings and operational efficiency. The proposal would see two Royal Mail vans leave Hawes at 7.30 am with their postmen to go to Leyburn to sort the mail in inferior premises to what is available in Hawes. One Postman lives in Hawes and the other in Kirkby Stephen and comes to Hawes to undertake his work.

This will surely cost more than one postman collecting the unsorted mail at Leyburn (17 miles from Hawes, 34 miles return trip) for the two rounds based at Hawes, bringing it back to Hawes where he is joined by the other postman and sorts the mail in the premises provided and then they set off on their rounds. The meeting was at a loss to see how efficiencies and cost savings would be realised in these circumstances.

The Chairman commented that the Hawes Post Office will go beyond the extra mile to sort letters/parcels, but some post is 'signed for' and under the proposal it would have to go back to Leyburn which is not manned in the afternoons or at weekends. His enquiries in Ingleton whose Sorting Office closed 4 years ago is that the delivery service has never been the same since. The Ingleton community now travel to Carnforth to collect undelivered mail, a 50-mile return journey.

There were general concerns at the meeting that there may be a hidden agenda around the Universal Service Guarantee which only has five more years to run and guarantees a 6 day a week postal delivery service. The Upper Dales would be the very type of deeply rural community that Royal Mail would seek to reduce this service once it is allowed to do so under the terms of the privatisation deal arranged by the Government in 2013.

The Chairman asked the members of the public if they had any questions or comments.

Kevin Nugent asked whether people from Hawes are excluded from applying for the posts. The Chairman said no, but Mr. Nugent suggested his experience is where the jobs used to be based is the last consideration they would take into account.

John Lumley commented that it is obvious they will employ staff from Leyburn rather than the Hawes area. This would result in lost jobs where wages would have been spent in the Upper Dales economy.

David Khan commented that the extra mileage, vehicle wear and tear and lost labour of the proposal would well exceed the current running costs and he did not think there would be any material cost savings over using the Hawes Sorting Office, but rather a significant loss. There would also be a loss of the local knowledge of the 72 square miles that consists Hawes and High Abbotside Parish that occasionally defeats Leyburn based postmen when covering for holiday / sick leave of the 2 / 3 local postmen based at the Hawes Sorting Office.

The Chairman asked the Parish Council if they had any questions or comments.

Cllr Hunter agreed that the Parish Council need to fight to retain as many services and jobs in the Hawes area. Cllr Rhodes expressed concern for the long-term ripple effect of closing one service which could affect other services. Cllr Woolley commented that the Post Office has lost sight of the need for local knowledge of the tracks and addresses in the Parish, compared to cities where house numbers and street names are the norm.

Cllr Fawcett enquired as to the current costs of the Hawes Sorting Office. Cllr Rhodes confirmed that costs such as rent, insurance, heating and power equated to circa £600 per month, £7,000+ per year. Cllr Fawcett asked whether Mr. Sunak was aware of the proposal. Richard Noble commented that two people have written directly to the MP.

The Chairman suggested that the Parish Council strongly object to the proposed closure of Hawes Sorting Office.

Resolved unanimously - *The Parish Council to strongly object to the Royal Mail proposed closure of Hawes Sorting Office.*

The Chairman advised that an outcome decision should be received in a few weeks.

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Gayle Mill: Recent events concerning The Gayle Mill Trust / The future of Gayle Mill

The Chairman explained that Mr. Graham Bell, a Director of the Charity, North of England Civic Trust (NECT) had been invited to an informal meeting with the Gayle Mill Trustees ahead of the Parish Council meeting and also invited to the Parish Council meeting.

An e-mail response had been received from him stating *"You will appreciate from your experience that a legal process obligates those involved to follow appropriate procedures. I am sure therefore you also will understand that NECT has deliberately abstained from any public comment while the legal process with GMT is still active. That process continues until GMT vacates the mill, which GMT's solicitor has confirmed will take place by 31 March 2018. For that reason, NECT must continue to abstain from any comment or discussion on the matter, which means NECT cannot agree to attend any public or other meetings"*.

The Chairman said it appears NECT is not willing to communicate or reveal their plans to the local community, represented by the Parish Council, that hosts its historic mill. This was an abysmal way for a Charity to treat a fellow Charity, the local community and the team of 40 public-spirited volunteers at the GMT who give up their valuable time for free. He added the excuse that the NECT cannot comment until after the GMT has vacated Gayle Mill is so much cock and bull given the GMT had given its word in public it will be leaving the Mill on 31st March and in any case the Parish Council wanted to hear from NECT about the future for Gayle Mill rather than the past.

The Chairman explained he had been contacted by Mr. Lambert of Gayle Mill Trust as it was clear the Trust were being evicted by NECT, the owner of the building. The Gayle Mill Trust and its volunteers have looked after an iconic and attractive Grade 2* listed local building with long and unique history, a base for small rural businesses and a tourist attraction, and there were serious concerns about the future of the Mill.

The Chairman asked if the Trustees of Gayle Mill Trust would like to address the meeting.

Mr. Lambert explained that since Gayle Mill opened to the public just over a decade ago the intention was that a local group would take total responsibility of the building, but this did not happen, and the Trust were put on an Agreement to Occupy for five years with a one-year notice period.

At the end of five years nothing was done. The Agreement was then extended by 18 months. At the end of the 18 months in September 2017 the Trust were in negotiations with Mr. Bromley, a Director of the NECT and they thought it was going well with talks of another period of occupation.

The Trust received a message from Mr. Bromley that he would no longer be their contact and Mr. Bell would be their new contact. A letter was then received giving the Trustees only two weeks' notice (not one year) to vacate the Gayle Mill and to remove all their equipment on vacation.

The Trustees took advice from a local solicitor who suggested that the Trustees request a meeting. Several letters were sent and refused and then a NECT solicitor letter arrived threatening court proceedings. The Trustees Solicitor advised the Trustees to agree a date and to vacate the premises. The Trustees planned for the end of March 2018 as time was needed to move timber and equipment.

Even though the Trustees had agreed to vacate, NECT did not acknowledge this and put in its own papers that the Gayle Mill will reopen in Spring 2019. There was no indication that Gayle Mill Trust will be allowed to re-occupy Gayle Mill when it re-opens. NECT demand for vacant possession would infer they would want to sell it, and it was common talk in the community it would return to the plans it had in 2004 to convert it into luxury residential flats, a proposal that was bitterly fought by the local community until it was dropped.

Ruth Lindsey commented that she has reviewed the NECT Accounts and in 2016 Gayle Mill looked to have been transferred from being an Investment Property to a Heritage Asset. A Heritage Asset cannot be sold. NECT do not appear to have any funds in their accounts to do anything with Gayle Mill. Mrs Lindsey enquired as to how many times a year NECT visited Gayle Mill. Mr. Lambert said an average of once per year.

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Mr. Lambert went on to say that he and Tony Routh had arranged asbestos repairs on the lower part of the sunken yard to make it safe. 2,000+ hours work had been put into refurbishing the turbine and a detailed record of the work had been maintained. The building was considered structurally sound by the Trustees and there had been no visits from professional surveyors in the last few months. There was a discussion by the meeting about the possibility that Gayle Mill may have been sold.

Audrey Thornborrow, Friend of Gayle Mill Trust member, thanked the Chairman for his efforts and ongoing support.

Resolved unanimously - *The Parish Council to write to North of England Civic Trust (NECT) and report the matter to the Charity Commission for investigation in the form of a complaint.*

The Chairman thanked the Trustees of Gayle Mill for all their efforts and also thanked everyone for attending to support Hawes Sorting Office and Gayle Mill. Several members of the public left the meeting

Issues / Concerns @ Richmondshire District Council (RDC) including the transfer of the full-time Hawes Street Caretaker post to Richmond

The Chairman updated that the full time Hawes Street Caretaker had resigned from his position following pressure by the Chief Executive Officer (Mr. Tony Clark) not to speak to the Parish Council or the local District Councillor (i.e. Cllr. Blackie) in regard to issues of leaving Hawes at 7.00 am to report to Richmond and then coming back to clean toilets in Hawes and grit steps to / from the Gayle Lane Car Park down to the Penny Garth. He has been replaced by someone living in Richmond.

Service after service provided in Hawes by Richmondshire District Council ((RDC) has been cut back. There has been no further gritting of steps from Gayle Lane Car park to Penny Garth since the Hawes based street caretaker resigned.

The Hawes Toilets see the highest footfall of 184,000 visitors per year in the District (prior to a coin entry mechanism being installed) and are now cleaned 4 times per week in winter and once a day in summer. The Community Office has received numerous complaints. Often these complaints are about the coin mechanism not working and invariably they are met by assertions by the RDC Street Scene Officers based 27 miles away in Richmond that (local) vandalism has been the cause of their failure.

Resolved unanimously - *The Parish Council to invite Mr Clark and Cllr Yvonne Peacock (the Leader of RDC) to the next Parish Council meeting to discuss with the Council its issues and concerns.*

Highway Flooding at Haylands Bridge

The Chairman updated that North Yorkshire County Council had now become involved and had reminded the landowner of the legal requirements that water flowing from the landowner's private land onto the public highway was the landowner's private responsibility to deal with. It had advised that some immediate repairs to the broken river banking on the landowner's land would need to be made or the County Council would carry out repairs and the landowner would be responsible for the bill.

The landowner in response has carried out some work on the river bank to drive in some stakes and put some planks up and back fill behind with some top soil and rubble. It is hoped that this is a durable repair but if flooding problems continue then the Parish Council will return to the subject. There will be a site meeting with the landowner, with NYCC Highways Richmondshire Manager Richard Marr and Cllr. Blackie present, in the week commencing 19th February to inspect the repair work.

Proposals to charge 2nd Home Owners "at least 5 times" the current Council Tax on their properties

The Chairman was opposed to the 2nd Home Owner Proposal being proposed by the YDNPA and Cllr. Peacock as Leader of RDC to charge at least 5 times Council Tax as it would cause serious collateral socio-economic damage. The initiative is intended to lower price of houses, and young families who have recently taken out a mortgage to buy a house locally would find themselves in negative equity. It would undermine the housing market for all

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property owners in the Upper Dales. Above all else it would not deliver the objective of retaining / attracting young families and may drive those intending to stay to leave.

For example, the Chairman said he had discussed with a local man trading as an electrician, who has a young family, whose business comprised 10% for local people, and 90% for second home owners. If the 2nd home Owners market did not exist to support the local economy, he and his family would need to leave the Dale. Carperby, Melbecks, Hudswell and Reeth Parish Councils have all voted unanimously against supporting this initiative.

The Chairman asked for comments. A discussion followed. The Parish Council were not in favour of the proposal. Cllr Rhodes proposed, and Cllr Hunter seconded a resolution to strongly oppose the initiative.

Resolved unanimously - *The Parish Council to strongly oppose the proposal to charge 2nd Home Owners at least 5 times Council Tax, as supported by the YDNPA and the Leader of RDC, Cllr. Yvonne Peacock.*

Police Update

The Chairman explained that the Parish Council had taken Police Issues off the Agenda due to lack of any Police response to issues in the community. The Chairman welcomed PC Julian Sutcliffe who is the Beat Manager based at Leyburn. PC Sutcliffe explained that various changes were taking place. Sgt Stuart Granger is now on Rural Task Force with a wider remit. Sgt Finlay has taken over temporarily as Stuart's replacement. Lucy Osbourne is a newly recruited PCSO who has recently joined the North Yorkshire Police with a remit to cover Hawes & High Abbotside.

Mr. Sutcliffe read out crime statistics for the last 12 months compared to the previous:

- 5 incidents of crime damage vs 7 previously
- 8 incidents of theft vs 9 previously
- 2 incidents of assault vs 2 previously
- 4 vehicle offences (3 drink drivers in the last month)
- 12 burglaries vs 9 (happened one night in October 2017)

Mr. Sutcliffe outlined several positive initiatives:

- **Surgeries for Security Marking system** by Rural Task Force which works on all manner of things e.g. saddles
- **Dales Pub Watch**
- **Operation Byway** - unlawful antisocial use of green lanes e.g. quad bikes
- **Operation Owl** - Leaflets were given out at the meeting re Bird of Prey Persecution in North Yorkshire, illegal traps, poisoning, etc.
- **Dales Watch** continues to run and has a good set of volunteers
- **North Yorkshire Community Messaging** - e-mail, mobile, twitter, (not Facebook) www.NYCM.co.uk

The Chairman asked for questions or comments from the meeting.

Mr. Michael Webster expressed concern about talk of drug taking of young people. He enquired as to the scale of the problem and asked if it is increasing in the Upper Dales. Mr. Sutcliffe explained that there was Class A drugs problems in Middleham and Leyburn where organised crime rings were targeting vulnerable young people including secondary schools. Much work was being carried out using search warrants and safeguarding techniques. Information was in short supply on the Upper Dales and he would encourage people to report any concerns to the Police.

The Chairman enquired as to whether the yellow phone outside the UWCO Office was still connected / in working order. PC Sutcliffe did not know but he would find out. The yellow phone at Leyburn was taken out and there was a lot of upset there, and Hawes would be very upset if they were to lose this essential facility.

The Chairman raised the issue that the Police Custody Suite which has been relocated from Northallerton to Harrogate which is much further away from Upper Dales (60 miles Harrogate to Hawes). The Chairman's concerns

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(which he has raised at an NYCC Richmondshire Area Committee meeting) is that not everyone is charged, and if released without charge on a Sunday there are no buses to return to the Upper Dales.

He enquired as to what arrangements are there in this situation. PC Sutcliffe explained that the Release package protocol from the Custody Sergeant is to ask questions about travel home arrangements. Police have a safeguarding responsibility and quite often people will be transported home.

PC Sutcliffe went on to explain there were big changes in the Bail System, less arrests to be made and so on. There is now a Voluntary Attendee Suite at Richmond, and it was hoped that Leyburn will get the same so that people can get interviewed at Leyburn if there is no threat to the safety of the Police Officer conducting the interview.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Sutcliffe and encouraged attendance at future Parish Council meetings.

4. Chairman's Advisory Items / Latest News / Progress updates

Co-option of Parish Councillor - The Parish Council now comprises 10 councillors, and it would like to co-opt a further councillor. The Chairman asked the Councillors to further enquire in the local communities.

Parish Precept Financial Year 2018/19

Resolved unanimously - *The Parish Council endorsed the sum of £15,700 as the Parish Precept.*

Parish Council Website

The Parish Clerk updated that the Parish Council Website was now up to date with meeting dates, agendas and minutes.

Electoral Boundary Review of Richmondshire District Council

The Chairman updated that whilst the outcome had not been published, he was confident that they will agree to the proposal the Parish Council supported.

Sedbusk Poors Charity

The Clerk updated that the Annual Return to the Charity Commission for the Year ended March 2017 had been submitted. The Trustees had been e-mailed by the Clerk to arrange an initial meeting and was awaiting responses.

Late Emerging and Tabled issues

The Parish Council have been approached by Richard Noble for a contribution to Hawes in Bloom. It was noted that Richard and his team make a wonderful job of the floral displays in the town.

Resolved unanimously - *The Parish Council to contribute £1,000 for floral displays for Hawes in Bloom.*

5. Play-parks Update

Robin Peters gave a brief update from his report (circulated prior to the meeting). The Chairman thanked volunteers Robin, Ian and Eric for all the hard work they carry out on the Play Parks.

The Chairman updated that a grant from the NYCC Upper Dales Locality Fund of £1,250 had been secured which can be used for Play Park maintenance / improvements. The Parish Council will make enquiries as to whether the Sedbusk Poors Charity could provide some additional funding.

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A site meeting and discussion with the volunteers is to be arranged to decide where to allocate the funds.

Robin asked if equipment at a cost of around £150.00 could be hired to clean up the Play Parks. The Chairman suggested a Volunteer Task Force to paint the various pieces of equipment.

Resolved unanimously - *Equipment hire of around £150.00 to clean up the Play Parks to be arranged.*

6. NYCC Highways

Various pot hole issues were discussed, and all were in hand or have been completed, according to the Chairman.

7. YDNPA Planning Applications

R/56/10G - Bainbridge Ings Caravan Site, Old Gayle Lane, Hawes - Full planning permission for use of land for 10 camping pods; extension of hardstanding for all year motor home/touring caravan use and extension of site to accommodate and retain a longer style static caravan adjacent to the site entrance (part retrospective)

The Chairman introduced this item and explained that the Parish Council had made an objection to the plans on the grounds that informal tenting / camping space had been lost.

Mr. David Khan the recent new owner of Bainbridge Ings Caravan Site was then introduced to the meeting.

Mr. Khan explained that he had been in business for 15 years and he owned 5 other parks in the Lake District. The Business Model is to have them spaced out. His business has 120 pitches and employs 20 people full time. He can do this due to the way he operates his businesses. Development of the Bainbridge Ings Caravan Site will employ 4 people (not including family) the year round in well paid jobs. He is dedicated to staff and sustainable development.

He is asking for the Parish Council and members of public to support proposed changes in the Park and clarified that the number of pitches will not increase but will be moved around within the park. He is asking for eight pods, some with hot tubs which would bring in people all year round. It would bring around 100 people to the Park each week who spend in the local area. Mr. Khan said that he had no problem if the Planning Application was conditional.

He said he was advised early on that motor homes, camping and glamping are important to the Town. He had kept an open mind and monitored the business. He plans to spend around £500,000 on the Park. He does not plan to run shops or provide food so will not take away from existing businesses in the town. The camping element is not very profitable, but it is a significant part of the business at Bainbridge Ings.

There was a concern from the meeting that they were not continuing to provide camping facilities. He clarified that they will be, but in a different field.

The Chairman said that Mr. Khan needs to show the camping clearly on the plans. Mr. Khan confirmed that he would resubmit plans and e-mail the Chairman and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority the next day.

The Chairman asked for comments and questions.

When asked if Mr. Khan was to purchase additional land what area of the business would he expand, he said he would expand the tented camping business.

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After discussion the Chairman proposed that the Parish Council position will be to remain as an objector until amended plans are submitted clearly showing how the 4 fields are going to be allocated amongst the various types of accommodation to be provided. The Parish Council will then reconsider their position and submit their final view.

The Chairman has already called it in as an YDNPA Planning Committee member to be decided by the Planning Committee.

Resolved unanimously - *The Parish Council to maintain its objection to the planning application at Bainbridge Ings Caravan Site but it will consider its position in the event of receiving a clear set of plans of the site showing where informal camping / tenting will be allocated and the number of tents which can be accommodated in the allocated space.*

YDNPA Planning Committee - Report of the items in Hawes & High Abbotside discussed by the Planning Committee

December Planning Committee Report - R/48/160 - Spring Wood Barn, Cotterdale - Approved in line with amended plans circulated to Parish Councillors

January Planning Committee Report - There is no Planning Committee held in January

February Planning Committee Report - There were no applications from the Parish on this Committee Agenda

Delegated Decisions by YDNPA planning officers after consultation with the Parish Council

R/48/37B - Town Head House & Eller Haw, Cotterdale - Approved in line with amended plans submitted

R/56/322B - Turpits Barn, Ingleton Road, Hawes - Refused - Application to change the S.106 Agreement to allow for the charging of a local need market rent instead of a local need affordable rent

8. Parish Council - Financial Matters

The Parish Clerk had circulated information on the bank account receipts and payments made. It was noted the Bank Balance was £3,920.52 as at 18th February 2018. There were no outstanding invoices.

Resolved unanimously - *The Parish Council approved of all the payments that had been made.*

9. Any Other Business

None

Date of next Meeting - Monday 30th April commencing at 7.15pm at Gayle Institute.

Meeting Closed at 9.45pm

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